

Jason Hough
17403 Hardy Road
Mt. Airy, MD. 21771
Howard County
December 20, 2010

Howard County Council
Howard County, MD.

Dear Councilman/Councilwoman

I am testifying to ask you to support BILL NO. 55 – 2010 (ZRA – 117).

The purpose of this bill is to protect resident's rights to own and operate honey bee hives.

My name is Jason Hough. I am a lifetime resident and farmer in Howard County. Growing up in Howard County, I participated in 4-H, the Howard County Fair, Howard County Pony Club, multiple sports teams, and earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in the University of Maryland system in information technology. I started my professional career working for Sandy Spring Bank working in information technology, and I currently work for an International Hospitality Company (Marriott International), also in information technology. I continue my involvement in 4-H and currently serve as a director for the Howard County Fair Association.

I started my first beehive at age 16. I now own and operate 50-75 colonies of honey bees annually, and will expand to over 200 next year.

I have given you my background for ³4 reasons:

1. To illustrate the diverse background and education, both farm and academic, that I was able to gain in Howard County. Your support for this bill (and others like it) will protect future generations' ability to participate and learn from the agricultural experiences currently available in Howard County. With that diversity comes perspective. I have countless experiences with both friends and co-workers, who at first glance were terrified at even the thought of being near a colony of bees. With time and education, most of them (my wife included, maybe my toughest sell) have an entirely new perspective and appreciation of the value of bees and that bees and people (my kids) can coexist in approximately the same area.

All beekeepers in Howard County provide this educational service. I think everyone in this room understand's the fear of the 'unknown' – we need to support our beekeeping residents so they can do their part in spreading the value of this agricultural enterprise.

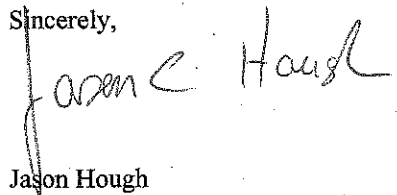
2. I will be managing beehives at six to ten locations next year at the request of farmers. These farmers need the beehives for pollination services to have successful crop yields. Pollination is not a 'nice to have' in Howard County – it is a requirement for these businesses. Demand for locally produced products has never been stronger. Production of local honey will be reduced without your support on this bill.
3. Express, on behalf of the Howard County Fair Board, the appreciation of the educational value of the 'observation hive' and other educational material provided by the Howard County Beekeepers Association at the fair. Without your support on this bill, current members of this association will no longer be able to keep bees on their property.

Honey bees are an obvious part of Howard County's ecological/agricultural system. Having beekeepers help in keeping an even population of Honey Bees throughout the county is a GOOD thing. Beekeepers are also your best protection, *if* we ever have to deal with Africanized Honey Bees.

Honey Bees are constantly faced with challenges unheard of in years past. From Tracheal and Varroa mites, reduced foraging area because of reduced farm land, and CCD (Colony collapse disorder), this is one of the most challenging times ever for the Honey Bee in Howard County. Please help us keep the zoning law off the list of challenges.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jason E. Hough". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Jason Hough

301-748-3078